

REMARKS

Claims 1-23, 30-34, 37-43 and 46-47 are pending in the present application. By this reply, claims 24, 27, 35-36 and 44-45 have been canceled. Claims 25-26 and 28-29 have been previously canceled. Claims 1, 14, 30 and 39 are independent claims.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the Examiner's indication that claims 36 and 45 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but will be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Accordingly, only to expedite prosecution and to place the application in condition for allowance by the present Reply, independent claims 30 and 39 have been amended to incorporate therein allowable claims 36 and 45, respectively, and their intervening claims 35 and 44, respectively. Thus, independent claims 30 and 39 and all of their dependent claims, 31-34, 37-38, 40-43 and 46-47 are allowable over the prior art of record.

Similarly, independent claims 1 and 14 have been amended to include similar subject matter of allowable claims 36 and 45. As such, indication that independent claims 1 and 14 and their dependent claims 2-13 and 15-23 are allowable is deemed proper and respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. § 103 Rejection

Claims 1-6, 9-10, 30-32, 35, 37-41, 44 and 46-47 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Fukushima et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,111,444) in view of Ohata et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,469,978). Claims 7-8, 11-23 and 33 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of Fukushima et al. and Ohata et al. as applied to the claims above, and further in view of Ito et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,404,357). These rejections, insofar as they pertain to the presently pending claims, are respectfully traversed.

Without acquiescing to any of the Examiner's allegations made in rejecting these claims, to expedite prosecution only as discussed above, independent claims 30 and 39 have been amended to incorporate therein allowable claims 36 and 45, respectively, and their intervening claims 35 and 44, respectively. Other independent claims 1 and 14 have also been amended to include similar subject matter of allowable claims 36 and 45. Thus, the rejections are moot and should be withdrawn.

CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons and in view of the above clarifying amendments, Applicant respectfully requests the Examiner to reconsider and

withdraw all of the objections and rejections of record, and earnestly solicits an early issuance of a Notice of Allowance.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and further replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Respectfully submitted,

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